

**M**INUTES OF THE VERNAL CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET  
WORKSHOP MEETING HELD JUNE 9, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the Vernal City  
Planning Conference room, at 374 East Main St, Vernal, Utah 84078.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Sonja Norton, Councilmembers Ted Munford, Dave Everett, Travis Allan, and Bert Clark. Councilmember Samantha Scott was excused from the meeting.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING:** Councilmember Ted Munford moved to approve the special meeting. Councilmember Travis Allan seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilmembers Munford, Everett, Allan, and Clark voting in favor.

**CONSIDERATION OF “GROW YOUR OWN” SPONSORSHIP:** Mayor Norton stated that she talked with Laura Foley and Ken Bassett after the last meeting when this topic was discussed. Mr. Bassett checked into it, and the City has an education fund for items like this. Therefore, it would not come out of the general fund. The purchase of a table is \$700 for eight people. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that we have contributed to this before. Mayor Sonja Norton stated yes, a year ago. Mr. Bassett stated that he was not aware at the last Council meeting that there was \$14,000 in the education fund. Mayor Norton explained that this sponsorship helps student teachers. Councilmember Munford mentioned that is a wonderful program. Councilmember Bert Clark suggested that there may be other State programs out there as well to assist these teachers. Councilmember Clark suggested these funds be dispersed a lot further around the table instead of just one specific teacher and find other sources to help them through the down times instead of from municipalities. Councilmember Dave Everett asked if the education fund has to be used for education. Mr. Bassett explained that the City has used it for a couple different things. Years ago the City had a scholarship fund. The program went away because it was difficult to make a decision as to who was going to get the scholarship. Mr. Bassett stated that this is a good program and complimented Laura Foley for her work during these tough times for student teaching. *Councilmember Munford moved to give \$700 for a table. Councilmember Allan seconded the motion.* Councilmember Clark recommended that they report back to the City Council on how the money was spent and added that it is a good program. Mayor Norton suggested they also check into Councilmember Clark’s idea to see if there is some State assistance they could receive.

*Councilmember Munford .....aye;*

*Councilmember Allan .....aye;*

*Councilmember Clark .....aye;*

*Councilmember Everett .....aye.*

**FY2017 BUDGET WORKSHOP – GENERAL FUND**

**GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS:** Ken Bassett explained to new Councilmember Travis Allan that the Government Buildings Department is responsible for the maintenance of the City’s buildings and grounds and has four full-time employees and a part-time custodian. Danny Anderson explained that his staff is in charge of the new City building, the public works building, the animal shelter building, etc. The total is around 12-15 buildings. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if the City is reimbursed from the animal shelter. Mr. Anderson stated that the Special Service Districts pay the City employees’ wages, and all of their own supplies and

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expenses. Mr. Bassett had a question on the medical, because it seems to be increased from last year. Mike Davis stated that last year Wayne Smith did not have insurance, but it was counted in on this year's budget. Councilmember Ted Munford asked if professional services are traditionally \$15,000 every year. Mr. Anderson explained that early on it was, but he went through it today and put the amount as \$12,000. Mr. Bassett asked Mr. Anderson if he could explain what the expense is for. Mr. Anderson explained that it is money to spray buildings and bug killer pesticides. Councilmember Ted Munford mentioned carpet cleaning. Mr. Anderson stated that this is also for the maintenance of the generator, change oil, and the big tester that makes sure it does what it is supposed to do. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if the \$29,000 for buildings and grounds include the walking park. Mr. Bassett stated that there are no City parks included in this budget. Councilmember Clark asked about the bridges when they need repaired. Mr. Anderson explained that the line item for City parks is for employee hours. Councilmember Munford thanked Mr. Anderson and stated that he is comfortable with this budget.

**I.T.:** Councilmember Ted Munford stated that software is expensive, but he does not see anything out of the ordinary and it looks good. Mayor Sonja Norton stated that she has talked about the City website and making it more informational. Mayor Norton would like to see updates on the website weekly. Councilmember Munford stated that should be doable. Mayor Norton suggested having the department heads update their information at least weekly on something the public should know about. Councilmember Munford suggested twice a month would be sufficient. Mayor Norton stated at least once a month. Councilmember Munford suggested that there be someone who proof reads the information for legal purposes. Mayor Norton stated with it being summer, there could be an update on yard sale signs, etc. Ken Bassett and the Council thanked Mr. Searle.

**PLANNING AND ZONING:** Allen Parker joined the meeting by telephone conference call. Mr. Bassett stated that he went through this budget, and the issue was cutting the training budget, but at the same time, the committee understood that there are two inspectors and a code enforcement officer that needs training to keep up to date on issues. Mr. Bassett explained that Corey Coleman is on the State board for building code and is the only voice the City has on how the building code gets changed from year to year. This Board has meetings periodically that Mr. Coleman attends. Mr. Bassett reported that the committee cut \$3,000 from the travel and training budget. Mike Davis explained that the department request was for \$12,300, and the committee changed it to \$9,300. Mr. Bassett reported that the line item for registration costs for training was also cut by another \$1,700. Mr. Bassett explained that the line item is for professional services such as plats being reviewed by the engineering firm. Councilmember Travis Allan mentioned that this line item is down dramatically compared to the 2014-2015 budget. Mr. Bassett explained that professional services and plan reviews were higher especially in 2014 when the Vernal Town Center was being built. Allen Parker added that also plan reviews and professional services were once lumped together under one line item, and now they are separated out. Mr. Bassett explained how a plan review is done on a new building by a third party professional. The City takes care of the bill and then sends the owner or builder the bill for reimbursement, so it will show as an expense, then it will show in revenues. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that he did not see anything in this budget that stood out. Councilmember Allan asked about the software this year and if it is purchased every year. Mayor Norton asked Mr. Parker to explain the \$6,000 software. Mr. Parker explained that it is the licensing of the

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GIS software and other programs that are used. Mr. Bassett stated that it is showing \$5,000 for building Code software. Mr. Parker explained that it is partially for the Iworks software licensing and modifications that are coming up. Mr. Bassett reported that \$1,000 could be cut from this line item because the software that was going to be purchased to track business licensing is not going to be purchased this year. Councilmember Allan asked about the increase in medical insurance. Mr. Davis stated it could be an employee that did not have insurance and now does or they have added dependents. Mr. Parker stated that part of that could be from adding his wife.

**STREETS:** Mr. Bassett explained that Glade Allred brought to his attention that there is a vacuum sweeper that is going to need some maintenance this fiscal year, and the price estimate from the equipment company is \$10,000. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that street sweeping is important; therefore, it must be done. Mr. Bassett suggested taking it out of the equipment fund versus the general fund. Mike Davis stated there is the streets fund. Mr. Bassett asked Mr. Davis to make a line item in the streets fund for that expense. Mr. Davis stated he would check both funds to see what is there, and then decide from there. Councilmember Bert Clark suggested when they order the new equipment, they check into some type of lining or fiberglass coating. Councilmember Munford that is a great idea to make Mr. Allred aware of.

**JUSTICE COURT:** Judge Richards reported that with the down turn in the economy, the court is still busy. Councilmember Bert Clark asked about the fine collections. Judge Richards stated that community service requests have increased and revenue is down. Judge Richards stated that he has been able to manage the court with three clerks; however, there used to be four clerks before he was hired on. Judge Richards explained that on court days, if a clerk is sick, there would not be enough coverage. Mayor Sonja Norton asked about the judges conferences. Judge Richards stated that he attends four conferences a year. There are two conferences a year that are mandatory. The clerks have one mandatory conference a year, and Dawn attends two or three a year. Judge Richards reported that he is currently a representative on the Justice Court Judges Board for the education department which requires a little more travel. Judge Richards explained that all the judges in the area rotate this position. Mr. Bassett asked the Judge to explain the bailiff coverage and the need for three officers in the court at the same time. Judge Richards explained that he realizes that it is costly to have three officers, but after a lot of research, he felt it was safer for the court. Judge Richards stated that after the court lost Holly Dick as the bailiff, the court days were cut from three days a week to two days a week and those two days are full. The biggest benefit of two or three bailiffs is security. There was concern when the inmates were stacked against the wall and family was passing notes back and forth. Currently the inmates are kept in the holding cells and cannot be left alone. One bailiff has to be watching the door at all times. Mayor Norton suggested hiring part-time officers who have retired or hire reserve officers to fill the bailiff positions. Mr. Bassett mentioned that part-time employees still receive benefits. Judge Richards encouraged the Council to come into court to see the quality he gets out of the officers now versus hiring part-timers. There have been no complaints since having a Sergeant on duty in the court room. Judge Richards agreed that it is more costly, but it is money well spent. Councilmember Travis Allan asked about having one full-time bailiff like before. Dylan Rooks explained that having a full-time bailiff was a waste of money, because there was not enough for them to do when court was not in session. Judge Richards stated that you do not want to cut law enforcement when things get bad. There is a lot

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more drug, alcohol, and domestic violence. There was a considerable amount of discussion regarding hiring part-time reserve officers to fill the bailiff position versus using the current Sergeants and officers. The Council discussed the positive and negative aspects. Mr. Bassett stated that this was good conversation, and it was concluded that for security reasons, it is important having Sergeants in the court room as a supervisory element. Judge Richards stated that he understands it is a time that cuts need to made; however, over the years he has been the Judge, there has been no incidents, no lawsuits, or any other problems.

**NARCOTIC STRIKE FORCE:** Ken Bassett asked Mike Gledhill to explain the Narcotic Strike Force program. Mike Gledhill reported that the strike force is funded by a grant of \$66,000 and the rest from all the entities of the Basin. The job of the strike force is to identify the drug dealers in the community by using confidential informants. Mr. Bassett asked if the down economy had any effects on the drugs in the community. Mr. Gledhill stated that as far as drugs are concerned, nothing changes. However, you will see more thefts and other crimes due to unemployment. Councilmember Bert Clark asked about a house being watched when the police and strike force are aware of drugs actively being sold. Mr. Gledhill stated that they do not want a patrol guy spooking them off and putting the whole case in jeopardy. Mr. Gledhill explained how a drug dealer is arrested around 11:00 p.m. and has distribution charges with around \$90,000 in bail and is bailed out by 7:00 a.m. in the morning. Dylan Rooks stated that then the dealer has to go right back to dealing drugs to pay the debt back. Mayor Norton stated that either way, the public ends up paying for their defense. Councilmember Clark stated that it is frustrating spending tax dollars in the budget for strike force search, seize and sale. Mr. Bassett asked about the number of employees in the strike force. Mr. Gledhill stated there are six with one from each local agency. Mr. Gledhill explained the procedure for the process of the strike force and their interdiction activity or roundup with pending drug buys. Mr. Bassett explained the training that is involved with the strike force. Mr. Gledhill stated that the swat team is available by phone call. Councilmember Clark asked about the tribe and their involvement. Mr. Rooks explained that the tribe has their own drug issues to deal with, and they have their own jurisdiction to deal with. Mr. Gledhill stated that the tribe has their own issues and the strike force stays off the reservation.

**VICTIMS ADVOCATE:** Ken Bassett explained that the Victim Advocate program has its ups and downs with the economy. Alisha Gowen stated that she is fine with her department's budget. Mayor Sonja Norton asked Ms. Gowen if she has seen an increase in domestic violence since the down turn in the economy. Ms. Gowen stated that there are a lot of people traveling out of town to work and when returning home, you may see an increase in domestic violence. The victim stays here in the home with a restraining order on the offender who leaves to go back to work; therefore, the women's shelter is down. Mr. Bassett explained that the women's shelter is owned by the City, and the State is looking to bring in a third party administrator to manage the shelter. Mr. Bassett stated that his comment to the State was that it depends on the program and the third party that would be managing the facility. Mayor Norton asked if the City is responsible to pay for this third party. Mr. Bassett stated no. Ms. Gowen stated that there are only two shelters that are under the direction of the State of Utah, Vernal and Price. All of the rest have gone private with third parties managing them. The State would like to be out of the shelter business to cut costs. Ms. Gowen explained that what that would mean for the City is donations would now transfer to operating expenses. Ms. Gowen reported that the program did

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receive a VOWA grant, but did not get a VOCA grant this year, which in the past was \$9,000. Through the VOWA grant, the program could ask for \$1,500 in emergency funds that pays for gas cards, Walmart cards for diapers and formula, etc. Mayor Norton asked if the City still has VOCA expenses even if there is not VOCA grant to offset the costs. Ms. Gowen answered yes, there are VOCA expenses all the time. Mr. Bassett and the Council thanked Ms. Gowen for all her hard work.

**POLICE:** Ken Bassett reported that the committee went through this budget and looked at the needs that they felt were necessary. Councilmember Bert Clark asked about the dispatch funds. Dylan Rooks stated that dispatch is at \$96,000 versus \$102,000 last year. The Basin has done a great job in managing the E911 funds. Mr. Rooks reported that the captain of the communications center came out and reported to the board that there was \$1.2 or \$1.6 million dollars in the E911 funds. There was an increase in contributions, because they made dispatchers a part of the public safety retirement. Mayor Sonja Norton stated that there needs to be more than one dispatch meeting a year. Mr. Rooks explained that the governing board meets once a year; however, every four months all of the agency department heads meet. Mayor Norton mentioned that she did not know they were meeting every four months. Mr. Rooks added that he usually meets with Laconna once or twice a week to go over issues. Mr. Bassett asked the Council if they had any questions on the numbers or line item purposes. The Council agreed with the budget.

**WATER AND SEWER:** Ken Bassett mentioned that there is water flowing in Ashley Creek right now which has not happened in a while and water running down Dry Fork. This has been a better water year. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if Steinaker was full. Mr. Bassett answered no. They can only fill Steinaker to a certain level due to some geological issues. Mr. Bassett reported that he met with the Water Conservancy District a few weeks ago, and they are trying to find a way to correct the issues. They need to make sure that there is no stress on the dam like last year. Mayor Sonja Norton thought the dam was scheduled to be fixed a year or two ago. Mike Davis, Water Superintendent stated they did not get the funding. Mr. Bassett stated that he is not aware of concerns with water usage and creating any schedules to water at certain times of the day. It is suggested to now water between 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Mayor Norton mentioned that there is nothing set in place yet for scheduling. Mr. Davis stated that the Governor has a “slow the flow” campaign. The Rural Water Association has a campaign called H2oath to have cities and businesses pledge to conserve water. Mr. Bassett mentioned that the cost of treatment of the water is going up a little. They are adding another employee at the treatment plant, and Vernal City is the primary user of the Central Utah plant, and Ashley Valley, Maeser, and Jensen use a little bit. Mr. Davis reported that Ashley Valley is building a new treatment facility. Councilmember Clark asked why the increase in employees. Mr. Davis explained that the new UV treatment plant is managed 24 hours a day with three employees who never get a day off and generates overtime. They decided it would be best to hire a new entry level employee. Mr. Bassett recalled the Flint Michigan situation with the treatment of water. Mr. Davis explained how the water samples are checked and sent in to be evaluated for lead, which got Flint Michigan in trouble. Mr. Bassett reported that at the next Council meeting, the vendor will be announced for the CIB project for the meter system as well as the sewer relining project coming up. Mayor Norton asked when the project will start. It was noted that it would start in July. Mr. Davis explained that with the backhoe lease you pay \$981 a year for 300 hours. Councilmember

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Clark asked about the merchant bank fees. Mike Davis, Finance Director, explained that there is a small fee paid every time someone pays with a debit or credit card for a miscellaneous expense such as a fine, building permit fee, etc. Mayor Norton mentioned that more people are probably using cards to pay their bills. Mr. Davis explained that the fee is not charged for customers paying their water bill. Mayor Norton asked how many customers are paying with a debit or credit card. Mr. Davis reported around 700 customers are using express bill pay. Mayor Norton asked out of how many customers. Mr. Davis stated around 3,500. Mayor Norton asked if the City collects more money with the addition of express bill pay. Mr. Davis explained that the customer has to pay or be shut off after two months, so it has been a nice convenience for customers to pay with a card. Mayor Norton stated that it will be nice to have the new water meter system installed. Mr. Davis stated that it is the best we can get. Mr. Davis reported that the sewer cleaning machine is on a five year rotation and will need replaced in during the FY2018 budget. If it does not get replaced next year, the City loses the 50% buy back option. Mayor Norton asked how much the machine is going to cost. Mr. Davis stated they paid around \$500,000 for the original purchase. Mr. Davis stated that in the past the City Council has allowed him to borrow the money from the equipment replacement fund which was paid back in three years.

**MAYOR & COUNCIL:** Councilmember Bert Clark asked who gave approval for the carnival to be held in a public street. Mayor Sonja Norton stated that the City approved it. Councilmember Clark asked if these permits require an inspection after they leave to see if there was any damage done. Councilmember Ted Munford stated that when he lived next to the area, he saw areas in the parking lot that were damaged. Mayor Norton mentioned talking with the County about this issue. Councilmember Clark asked who was responsible. Councilmember Munford asked who made the request. Ken Bassett stated the County made the request. Councilmember Munford explained that some of that equipment causes lots of damage. Councilmember Clark stated that there needs to be some follow up on this issue, and suggested they put metal plates down.

Ken Bassett reported that there is no election this year. All the numbers for contributions represent a 25% decrease. Councilmember Munford asked about the rodeo and other sponsorships. Mr. Bassett stated that most of those come out of the general fund. Councilmember Dave Everett asked if the Council approved the annual Rod and Gun Club. Mr. Bassett stated that they did not come to the Council this year. Mayor Norton stated that she thought they did. Councilmember Travis Allan mentioned that he had not seen them since he's been here from January. Councilmember Clark stated that maybe they will come before the fall shoot. Mayor Norton asked what groups are non-profit versus profit. Does the youth baseball make money off their tournaments? Mike Davis stated that they cannot charge attendance fees for the regional tournaments. Councilmember Clark stated if they do make money it is to buy supplies, pay for umpires, etc. Mayor Norton mentioned that the triathlon switched hands and came before the City this year. Mr. Bassett stated yes. Mayor Norton stated that she likes when they bring a report every year on how the money is spent. Councilmember Clark asked about the energy summit. Mr. Bassett stated that it is very well attended from a local, State, and National level. Councilmember Munford asked if Alive After Five was making a profit. Mr. Bassett stated that he did not believe they were making any profit. Mayor Norton mentioned there was some concern in the past over missed used money with the rodeo. Councilmember Clark

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explained that one person uses a credit card to attend meetings to make the rodeo successful. Mayor Norton asked how many people they pay for to go to these meetings. Councilmember Clark stated that he thought there were 10 from the rodeo committee, and if it costs \$150 for a hotel, then he is fine with it. Mayor Norton added that is if they are volunteers. Councilmember Clark stated that during the week of the rodeo, the committee works really hard. Mayor Norton talked to Mike Karren to see if it is really important that 10 people need to go to those meetings. Councilmember Clark stated that there is better accountability on the tickets and tracking system. Mayor Norton mentioned that she talked with Aubrey Young, and they will no longer be selling tickets online, and they will be moving their ticket booth from Cobblerock to the Lamplighter Motel. Mayor Norton stated that not selling them online may hurt their business. Councilmember Clark stated that in the past they did not have strict accountability, and it would still cost to print the tickets online. Councilmember Clark added that this year will be more efficient after talking with Cindy Williams. Councilmember Allan stated that he agreed with the Mayor, but as a City do we investigate every detail of their budget? Mr. Bassett stated that there are some things like the pageant that they cannot get around, but there may be some things they could do without. Councilmember Allan stated that it is a significant amount of money that the City contributes. Mayor Norton stated that she agrees with Councilmember Clark on the rodeo committee giving the City a printout of where the money is spent. Councilmember Allan stated that they must have a CPA, and maybe they could come and present the budget to the Council to show where the City's money is going. Councilmember Clark stated that he will get with Cindy and let her know that the Council would like to see the figures of where the money is being spent. Mayor Norton added that she is meeting with Mike Karren and will bring it up as well.

**CITY MANAGER:** Ken Bassett reiterated that he is retiring next year, and there will be some extra cost to hire and train someone to take his place. Councilmember Bert Clark asked Mr. Bassett if his last day will be the end of June next year. Mr. Bassett answered yes. Mike Davis explained that a part of the wage in this department is a cash out payment for vacation and sick leave. Mayor Sonja Norton stated that the City Manager is underpaid compared to other cities. Mr. Bassett agreed that today's wages are up higher. Councilmember Travis Allan asked if hiring another person to take Mr. Bassett's place is in the budget. Mr. Bassett explained that it was not in the budget and could be adjusted later.

**FINANCE:** Ken Bassett reported that there are no changes in this department. Councilmember Bert Clark asked if this department is hiring another employee. Mike Davis explained the changes that have been made with employees in his department. Michelle Rushton is leaving at the end of July, Sarah Lamb has stepped down into that position, and Mary Brickler has stepped down into Sarah's position leaving an opening for Treasurer. Councilmember Clark asked Mr. Davis if they are receiving applications for that position now. Mr. Davis answered yes. Mr. Bassett applauded Mike Davis for dealing with all the issues in his department and for having a very squeaky clean audit.

**CITY ATTORNEY:** Ken Bassett stated that he will be meeting with Dennis Judd, Mike Harrington and Lance Dean to make sure they are good for the same contract amount. Mayor Sonja Norton mentioned "or less". Mr. Bassett explained that eventually the City might hire one in-house attorney for civil and prosecution; however, it would take another full-time employee supplying staff for that attorney. There is a room that is for a City attorney. Mr. Bassett

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mentioned that the personnel appeals process has not been cheap, and the City is still looking at an appeals officer.

**NON DEPARTMENTAL:** Ken Bassett reported that there are no changes in this department.

**TRANSFERS:** Ken Bassett explained the payments to the cemetery and paying the County for the convention center. Mayor Sonja Norton suggested that the Cemetery Board post signs around the cemeteries stating when items from the graves will be removed instead of just relying on the newspaper and radio. Councilmember Bert Clark suggested getting a list of concerns together and giving it to the commissioners who oversee the new board. Councilmember Clark also suggested having names to contact on those signs if there are problems with water, fixing the pot holes in the road, where were the employees on Memorial Day, etc. Councilmember Clark explained that this is crucial to bring up at a joint meeting and will take the lead on it. Mayor Norton asked about books to look up graves. Councilmember Clark stated that you can search online for that information. Mayor Norton asked if the County is considering an airport advisory board to help the Transportation District. Councilmember Clark stated no. Mayor Norton asked when there will be another City and County meeting and reiterated the importance of these meetings for communication.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, *Councilmember Ted Munford moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Travis Allan seconded the motion, and the meeting was declared adjourned.*

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Mayor Sonja Norton

ATTEST:

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Roxanne Behunin, Deputy Recorder

(S E A L)